



ARKANSAS HISTORY COMMISSION NEWS ARKANSAS'S STATE ARCHIVES

ISSUE 21

JANUARY 2014

BRINGING THE AHC TO YOU

January 2–11

"Fought in Earnest" exhibit
Nevada County Depot
and Museum
Prescott

January 13—February 6

*African-American
Legislators Banner exhibit*
Arkansas State University
Mountain Home

January 15

*Martin Luther King
Birthday Bash*
Daisy Bates
Elementary School
Little Rock

January 20

Martin Luther King Holiday
AHC and Regional Archives
Closed

January 21—31

"Fought in Earnest" exhibit
National Park
Community College
Hot Springs

AHC Obtains Collection from Country Music Singer Petrella

The Arkansas History Commission is pleased to announce that Petrella, the "First Lady of Country Soul," has donated materials related to her musical career to the Commission. Petrella, a Hot Springs native, has had six singles in *Billboard* magazine's Country Music Top 100, including one that went to number 14 on the chart. In keeping with her genre-blending career, she has performed with a number of notable musicians ranging from country and bluegrass singer, Rhonda Vincent, to soul singer Gladys Knight. Since the release of her first album, *Countryversal*, she has continued to tour and perform before audiences across the country. She released her most recent album, *Shine on Me*, in 2013, which is available on her website, www.countryversal.com.



A visit with the First Lady:
AHC Staff Tatyana Oyinloye, Jane Wilkerson, and Jeff
Lewellen meet with Petrella (second from right).

While doing research on African-Americans in country music, Petrella came across some information about an African American country singer named Ruby Falls. She was alarmed that so little material was available. This led her to consider her own legacy as an artist. "I told myself that day," she recalls, "that if I was successful, I would try and leave a bigger footprint for the next person who will research this subject." This led Petrella to donate her materials to the AHC. The materials include programs, newspaper clippings, compact discs, and newsletters covering her entire career.



"The AHC is honored that Petrella chose to donate her materials to us," said Director Lisa Speer. "As the state archives, we strive to preserve Arkansas history in all of its many forms. Music is a large part of this state's heritage, and Petrella's music is unique and important and deserves a place alongside other Arkansas musical heroes." AHC Archivist Jeff Lewellen remarked, "Working with Petrella reinforced my belief that the best of Arkansas music is a blending of styles with Petrella bringing her background in R&B and Gospel into modern Country music."

Name This Newsletter - Win a Behind the Scenes Tour!

We continue to accept entries for our Name This Newsletter contest. Entries should be short, memorable, and advance the mission of the Commission, which is established by legislation and includes collecting material bearing on Arkansas history, copying and editing official records and other historical materials, encouraging historical work and research, and performing other work in relation to Arkansas history.

Entries can be submitted three ways. You may email your entry to brian.irby@arkansas.gov – be sure to include "Newsletter Contest" in the subject line of your email. You can also mail your entry to the Arkansas History Commission at One Capitol Mall, Little Rock, AR 72201; or you may drop off your submission in person at the front desk of our Little Rock research room. Entries must be postmarked or time-stamped by 11:59 p.m., February 15, 2014, to be considered. Multiple entries are welcomed and encouraged, but please submit them individually. With all entries, please provide us with a way to contact you in the event you are a contest winner. The grand prize winner will be announced in the March 2014 edition of the newsletter and will receive a behind the scenes tour and copies of *Documenting Arkansas* and *Traveled Through a Fine Country: The Journal of Captain Henry Brockman*. First and second runners-up will receive their choice of either of these two publications. Unleash the creative spirit that lies within and send in your suggestions — you might win a prize!

Commissioner Spotlight

The most recent addition to the Black History Commission of Arkansas is Reverend Barry Dobson. Since his appointment, he has found that his favorite part of serving on the Commission is the ability to make a difference in helping people achieve their research goals as well as the camaraderie of serving with his fellow commissioners. Rev. Dobson was born and raised in El Dorado. He later attended Ouachita Baptist University where he studied Sociology and developed an interest in the history of the Civil Rights Movement. After graduating, he stayed in southern Arkansas where he entered into the ministry. For the last twenty-one years, Rev. Dobson has been the senior pastor of St. John Missionary Baptist Church in El Dorado.



When not serving his church congregation or working with his fellow commissioners, Rev. Dobson is likely to be outdoors, hunting or fishing, or camping with his family. He sees these activities as an important stress relief valve. Another favorite hobby is cooking. In fact, his dream job would have been to own a restaurant and serve delicious food to his customers. The common element in all of these activities is a desire to serve – whether serving on the commission, serving his congregation, or serving his family, he is driven to serve and for this reason he is an invaluable addition to the Black History Commission of Arkansas.

Black History Commission News

The Black History Commission of Arkansas is hosting a reception on February 13, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. at the State Capitol honoring African American Legislators, past and present. The Black History Commission is sponsoring an essay contest for middle and high schools students in conjunction with the event. Students are invited to submit essays on one of the African American Legislators depicted on our ruler. A photo gallery of the legislators can also be found on the AHC website at:

<http://www.ark-ives.com/abhac/gallery.aspx>.

The essay should be submitted in Word doc. or pdf format and should be at least 300 words in length. Send submissions to tatyana.oyinloye@arkansas.gov by January 31, 2014. The Black History Commission is offering a cash award of \$100 to the student's school library for the purchase of African American history books, appropriate to the grade level. The student, his or her sponsoring teacher and school librarian will be recognized at the reception in February. To request a ruler or to ask questions regarding the contest please contact the Coordinator of African American History Program, Tatyana Oyinloye, at (501) 682-6892 or email her at tatyana.oyinloye@arkansas.gov.



The AHC and regional archives will be closed on January 20th in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday

KNOW YOUR COMMISSIONERS

Arkansas History Commission

Ms. Mary Dillard	Roland
Dr. Ray Granade	Arkadelphia
Dr. Ruth Hawkins	Jonesboro
Mr. Michael Lindsey	Fayetteville
Mr. Robert McCarley	Little Rock
Ms. Elizabeth Robbins	Hot Springs
Dr. Robert Sherer	Little Rock

Black History Commission of Arkansas

Mr. Marion Butler	Sherwood
Ms. Carla Coleman	Little Rock
Rev. Barry Dobson	El Dorado
Ms. Joyce Gibson	Prescott
Dr. John W. Graves	Arkadelphia
Mr. Myron Jackson	Little Rock
Mr. James Lawson	Jacksonville

**Arkansas
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**HOURS: 8 AM–5 PM, MON-SAT
CLOSED STATE HOLIDAYS**

From the Director



Happy 2014 dear friends of the Arkansas History Commission! The beginning of a new year is, of course, the time when we contemplate positive changes for the year ahead. For many like me, those dreaded resolutions usually include losing weight and getting more exercise. While these are commendable goals without a doubt, and will make the top of my list again this year, I'd like to encourage everyone to work in a few resolutions devoted to the preservation of history, as well as the preservation of self.

Invest some time and energy in taking care of your history or your family's history – label those photos that only you or Dad can identify; record an oral history with Grandma; invest in some storage boxes and folders and organize your memorabilia and correspondence. You'll enjoy the trip down memory lane, and if you work on a project with a family member, you'll have wonderful memories of the time you spent together!

Get involved with a preservation organization. There's something out there for everyone, whether your interest is genealogy, local history, museums, Main Street, or historic sites – and most organizations need and want volunteers. The Arkansas History Commission welcomes volunteers and has a variety of projects that you can work on at our three offices in Little Rock, Powhatan, and Washington – and from home! Call or email us if you want to make a difference in 2014!

Start a project to document the history of your community, your church, or an organization to which you belong. Perhaps like me, you are from a small town; but one that isn't fortunate enough to have an active historical society; or you belong to a church or organization with records scattered among members. Begin a documentary project to pull these records together before they're lost and forgotten; or take photos around your community so there'll be a visual record of how it looked when 2014 is "back in the day."

And if you decide to undertake a documentary project – personal or community – work with an organization to donate the results or copies of the results. Others interested in your community, church or family will be grateful, and you will create a legacy that will live on well beyond your lifetime.

News from NEARA



Transportation systems can create or sustain communities along their routes in the distant past as much as today. When railroads crisscrossed the nation, there were no regulations requiring herders to fence their stock, meaning that it

was common for cattle, horses, pigs, and other animals to wander onto the tracks. There is a reason the guard on the front of the train's engine was called a cowcatcher or a cattle catcher, after all.

In those early days, the railroad was liable for any livestock killed by their trains. This meant that any time a branded animal wandered onto the tracks in front of an oncoming train, the railroad had to pay the owner the value of the animal. All the owners of these animals had to do was show the carcass with their markings (such as crops on pigs' ears) or brand to prove it belonged to them. One of the stories often told by our patrons is of ancestors who, during tough economic times, drove livestock onto the tracks in order to collect money. Others have told of ancestors who changed markings or brands on dead animals in order to collect on unmarked animals killed by trains. The court records at NEARA include hundreds of damages claims against the railroads for killing livestock.

News from SARA



The historic records of county courts are a treasure trove of information. They cover all the business of the county: requests for roads and maintenance, schools, the care of paupers, bonds for free

persons of color, elections, fees for juries, witnesses in trials and on and on. SARA is fortunate to have typed copies with indexes of Hempstead County court records dating from 1837 to 1922 when the county started using typewriters.

These typed records are a relic of another era—the Great Depression. The typing of these records was a make-work project for women and girls done by the WPA, the Work Projects Administration.

For years these typed versions sat in the courthouse at Hope largely unused. Finally, they came to SARA where they have become an important tool for historical and family history research. The typed version may have its errors, but it eases the work of the researcher who doesn't have to pour over handwritten documents on microfilm. WPA workers also transcribed the circuit court records from the era.

New at the AHC

December donations:

AHC accessions

Arkansas Highway Department Records (11 cubic feet)
Women's Professional Basketball Collection (1 cubic foot)
J.J. Guidos Collection (1 cubic foot)

SARA accessions

Hempstead County original marriage licenses prior to 1875
(0.5 cubic feet)

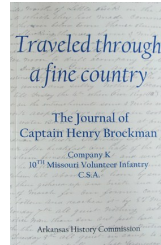
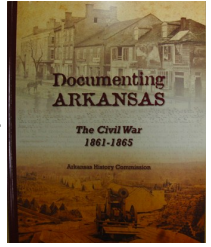
NEARA accessions

FSA Plats for Clover Bend Resettlement Project (6 plats)
Memphis City Directories (4 volumes, 2 cubic feet)

AHC Publications

The Arkansas History Commission has two publications for sale.

Documenting Arkansas: The Civil War 1861-1865 contains color images of documents taken from the AHC holdings. (\$29 plus \$5 shipping)



The Journal of Captain Henry Brockman is a transcript of the original journal. Brockman spent most of the war fighting in Arkansas. (\$15 plus \$2 shipping)

These are great gifts for any occasion! For more information and order forms click [here](#).

Staff Picks

This month we feature Mary Dunn's choice, Omer Rose Weaver's mess kit.

Why did you choose this?

"Omer Rose Weaver was one of the first Arkansans killed in the Civil War and I think it is interesting to have such a personal item. In this kit are salt and pepper shakers, and folding silverware. A lot of items that would be very impractical on the battlefield."



Are there other related materials in our collection? "We have the letters he wrote home to his mother in the Weaver-Field Papers."

Is there anything in this collection you found most interesting? "The mess kit is a really unique item – it shows the Weaver family's wealth in that they could provide something like that for their son when most soldiers would not have had such a thing. Along with the letters between him and his mother, it gives a glimpse into the lives and concerns of a Civil War era family."

The AHC Team



The newest addition to the AHC's team of Archival Assistants is Crystal Shurley. Shurley was born in Clearwater, Idaho, into a family heavily involved in the timber industry. Her father moved the family to Mena, Arkansas, to drive trucks for the local timber mills when she was ten years old. In Mena, Crystal met her future husband, David Lee Shurley.

Crystal graduated with a B.A. in History from UALR in 2012 and three months later joined the team at the AHC in Microphotography. Recently, she became

an Archival Assistant. Her tasks include processing the governor's papers and working on the archival survey team.

She has a love for history, especially Old Testament history and the history of religions. While working at the AHC, she became interested in some of the old church records in our collection. She found that the records offered a glimpse into the personal lives of ordinary people that would not be possible otherwise. "You can see a lot of their worldview through these records," she observes. She found it odd that so many of these records announced deaths but very few births. "It is likely," she argues, "that because of high infant mortality that the churches would not make those announcements—it was just too common. And that leads you to wonder about how these people viewed life."

An avid reader, she raised her children with the same love for the written word. She is lover of science fiction and fantasy, and particularly enjoys the work of Jim Butcher and David Eddings. She often proudly proclaims to those around her that her children would rather read than watch television. It is this drive and thirst for learning which we welcome in our newest Archival Assistant.

**CALL FOR ENTRIES!
NEARA AWARD
\$1,000 CASH PRIZE**

**DEADLINE:
FEBRUARY 1, 2014**

FOR DETAILS CONTACT LISA PERRY

lisa.perry@arkansas.gov